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MEDICAL LIBRARY

Proposed Grant Regulations Appear in Federal Register

A list of proposed rules to cover the award of grants for basic medical library resources--one of seven grant programs authorized under the Medical Library Assistance Extension Act of 1970--was published in the January 30th issue of the *Federal Register*.

The proposed regulations will aid in implementing the new programs authorized by the Extension Act. Under the Act, support will be available to aid institutions in establishing as well as expanding and improving medical libraries. The proposed regulations also eliminate the previous formula basis of determining grant awards, replacing it with the requirement that grantees provide adequate continuing support for their libraries from non-Federal funds both during and after the period of the award.

Public and private agencies, organizations, and institutions, as well as individuals, are invited to participate in the formulation of these regulations. Comments should be forwarded in triplicate within 30 days to the Director, National Institutes of Health, 9000 Rockville Pike, Bethesda, Maryland 20014, for consideration before the regulations are approved in final form for publication.

MLA Publication

The Medical Library Association has issued the first biennial supplement to *Medical Reference Works, 1679-1966: A Selected Bibliography*, which appeared in 1967. The bibliography was previously published as a part of the *Handbook of Medical Library Practice*.

Editor Mary Virginia Clark, Head of NLM's Reference Section, annotated about 300 books published in 1967 and 1968 on medicine and allied sciences. The entries are arranged by medical specialty or related field, such as dentistry and nursing; the supplement also contains additions and corrections to the parent volume.

Orders for *Medical Reference Works, 1679-1966. First Supplement, 1970* may be sent to the Medical Library Association, Suite 2023, 919 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60611. The price is $3.75.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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NATIONAL LIBRARY OF MEDICINE
NEWS

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The Recurring Bibliography Program

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The Recurring Bibliography Program was initiated by the National Library of Medicine as a service to both the librarian and the information user. The primary purpose of recurring bibliographies (RB's) is to bring together - in compact, convenient form - references on selected subject areas within the scope of biomedicine. The ultimate user of these references, of course, is the scientist in need of information. It matters little whether the user finds the desired references himself, or whether his medical librarian finds them for him. What is important is that the references be made readily accessible; recurring bibliographies, which are by-products of MEDLARS, are designed to provide that ready access.

There are currently 19 RB's published on a regular basis, and several others are in the planning stages. All but two were developed as joint ventures between NLM and other government agencies or nonprofit professional organizations. Through cooperative agreements, the Library and the individual sponsoring groups share the responsibility for the content of each RB and for production costs. The agreements are carried out in the following manner.

Representatives of the organization sponsoring a new RB outline in detail the subject scope of the proposed publication, the audience it is intended to serve, etc. One very important consideration is the availability or existence of other reference sources in the field; it must be demonstrated that the proposed RB will fill a void in the plethora of published indexes. The format and frequency of the new RB are agreed upon jointly by the sponsoring organization and NLM, consistent with the purpose of the bibliography and the needs of its users.

The next step is a long series of work-sessions during which subject specialists from the sponsoring organization and MEDLARS analysts from NLM create the exact specifications for the bibliography's content. These specifications, known as search strategies, are developed painstakingly through an iterative process. An initial strategy is conceived, constructed, and processed against the MEDLARS data base. Following critical review of the references retrieved, the strategy is modified as necessary before it is accepted as optimal. In most cases, one or more pilot issues of the proposed publication are then distributed to knowledgeable scientists for their review and comments. Further changes in the search strategy may then be made. (The search strategy for each RB is reviewed annually, and may be modified in accord with changes in *Medical Subject Headings*, indexing procedures, etc.)

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OB/GYN Workshop Held in Atlanta

A five-day Seminar/Workshop on Audiovisual Production and Use was held in December at the Library's National Medical Audiovisual Center in Atlanta, Georgia, in cooperation with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

Thirty-six participants attended the seminar portion during the first two days; twelve stayed for the workshop portion, which was conducted at the Annex during the last three days. Participants included 27 M.D.'s, 2 Ph.D.'s, and 6 nurses, representing 15 medical schools and schools of nursing, and 13 hospitals and health-related associations.

(Recurring Bibliographies,from Page 2)

On the average, over a year elapses from initial negotiations to publication of the first issue of the new RB. The final search strategy, which is, of course, retained, is processed against the MEDLARS data base on a regular ("recurring") basis. The references retrieved are arranged in camera-ready form by NLM and forwarded to the sponsoring organization. That organization is then responsible for publication of the bibliography and, in many cases, its distribution.

Each RB has certain advantages over *Index Medicus*. One of these has already been alluded to -- the inclusion in each of references within a somewhat narrower subject area than the broad-based *Index Medicus*. This intentional restriction -- which, in one sense, is an RB's main asset -- can also be a serious weakness if the RB is relied upon exclusively by the searcher. *Index Medicus* and other major indexes and abstract sources must be consulted for comprehensive literature searching; they contain a wealth of information not included in RB's.

Incorporation of one or more of the following traits into each RB provides them with various advantages over *Index Medicus:*

A. Some RB's cite references which never appear in *Index Medicus*. The *Index to Dental Literature (IDL)* includes (in addition to selected references from *Index Medicus)* citations to articles appearing in approximately 400 dental journals not indexed for *IM*. The *International Nursing Index (INI)*, like the *IDL*, also cites articles from about 200 additional nursing journals not indexed for *IM*. Finally, the *Endocrinology Index* publishes, in each bimonthly issue, many citations supplied by the UCLA Brain Information Service.

B. Any citation may appear in an RB under MeSH headings different from those under which it appears in *Index Medicus*. (This may be because of greater specificity of indexing, because of differing subject approaches in indexing, or for other reasons.)

C. Most RB's cite references under subject headings which are not "regular" MeSH terms -- that is, which do not appear in *Index Medicus*. There are 37 such

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(Recurring Bibliographies,from Page 3)

headings for anatomic structures, 88 for diseases, 25 for diagnostic technics and procedures, etc. In all, over 500 of these subject descriptors may appear in most RB's, but never in *Index Medicus*.

D. Some RB's provide, in addition to the standard bibliographic reference, a listing of all descriptors assigned by the indexer to each article.

E. Some RB's provide subject and/or author *indexes*, as well as subject and/or author sections, thus enabling the searcher to conduct a coordinate search.

F. Some RB's provide introductory material relative to the scope and content of the bibliography, including, in some cases, a list of all search terms used.

A complete list of RB's, with names and addresses of the sponsoring organizations, appears on the inside back cover of each issue of *Index Medicus* and *Monthly Bibliography of Medical Reviews*.

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